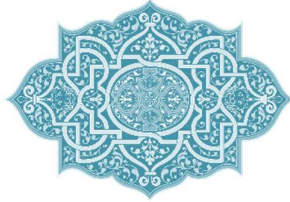


KEY POINTS – LESSON 28



Speaker: Sheikh Abdur Raheem Green

Note: The handout covers some of the details that are either in addition to the lecture or a summary of the discussion during the lecture

LEARN TO BE STILL IN SALAH

This lecture is divided in two parts.

- Part 1 deals with the virtues of fasting
- Part 2 deals with three levels of fasting as explained by Imam Ibn Qudamah in his book Minhaj ul Qasideen

Virtues of fasting

There are many virtues of Ramadan and fasting expressed in the Qur'an and in the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. If only one of these virtues was told to us it would have been enough motivation to perfect our fasting seeking that reward and the pleasure of Allah, but it is again from the mercy of Allah that He taught us many virtues of fasting so that we get encouraged even more. I will focus mainly on the virtues of forgiveness, salvation from Hell fire and reward of Paradise, but before that I shall mention few other virtues that are not less important than the latter.

A means to attain Taqwa

Allah says [meaning]: "O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it has been prescribed for people before you so that you will (learn how to) attain Taqwa" [al-Baqarah, 2:183]

The people of Taqwa are the successful people in this life and in the hereafter where they will be the dwellers of Paradise. Allah says [in meaning] : "This is the Book; in it is guidance sure without doubt to the Muttaqeen [people of Taqwa]. Who believe in the Unseen are steadfast in prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them. And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee and sent before thy time and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter. They are on (true) guidance from their Lord and it is these who are the successful. (al-Baqarah 1:1-5)



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He also says [meaning]: "Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth prepared for the Muttaqeen [people of Taqwa]. Those who spend (freely) whether in prosperity or in adversity; who restrain anger and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good. And those who having done something to be ashamed of or wronged their own souls earnestly bring Allah to mind and ask for forgiveness for their sins and who can forgive sins except Allah? And are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done. For such the reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens with rivers flowing underneath an eternal dwelling; how excellent a recompense for those who work (and strive)!" [Aali `Imraan, 3:133-136]

A merciful recommendation from Allah

"And fast, it is better for you, if only you knew" [al-Baqarah, 2:184]

Indeed if Allah says that something is better of us, it is rally better for us and we should strive to perfect it.

The practice of the Prophets

`Abdullah Ibn `Amr said : The Messenger of Allah, ﷺ said : The fast most loved by Allah is the fast of Dawood and the most loved prayer is the prayer of Dawood. He used to sleep half the night, pray for a third of the night, and then sleep during the last sixth of the night. He would also fast one day and then eat on the next. [Ahmad]

A great reward for those who fast

The Prophet said, "Allah said: The Fast is for Me and I will give the reward for it, as he (the one who observes the fast) leaves his sexual desire, food and drink for My Sake. Fasting is a screen (from Hell) and there are two pleasures (moments of happiness or joys) for a fasting person, one at the time of breaking his fast, and the other at the time when he will meet his Lord. And the smell of the mouth of a fasting person is better in Allah's Sight than the smell of musk." [Bukhari]

He also said: "Every action of the son of Adam is given manifold reward, each good deed receiving ten times its like, up to seven hundred times. Allah the Most High said: 'Except for fasting, for it is for Me and I will give recompense for it, he leaves off his desires and his food for Me'. For the fasting person there are two times of joy; a time of joy when he breaks his fast and a time of joy when he meets his Lord, and the smell coming from the mouth of the fasting person is better with Allah than the smell of Musk." [Muslim]

A means to cut sexual desires

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, ordered the one who has strong desires and the need for marriage, but is unable to marry, to fast. Fasting is thus a means of cutting desires, since it reduces the vigor of the limbs of the body, it calms them and bridles them.



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The supplication of the fasting person is granted

Jabir, radhiya Allahu `anhu relates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said : " In every day and every night, during the month of Ramadan, there are people to whom Allah grants freedom from the Fire, and there is for every Muslim a supplication which he can make and will be granted". [al-Bazzaar, Ahmad and Ibn Majah; Sahih]

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet, ﷺ, said: "There are three people whose supplications are not rejected: the fasting person when he breaks the fast, the just ruler and the supplication of the oppressed". [Tirmithi, Ibn Majah and Ibn Hibban]

A Means of intercession on the Day of Judgment

`Abdullah ibn `Amr reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The fast and the Qur'an are two intercessors for the servant of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The fast will say: 'O Lord, I prevented him from his food and desires during the day. Let me intercede for him.' The Qur'an will say: 'I prevented him from sleeping at night. Let me intercede for him.' And their intercession will be accepted." [Ahmad]

In Ramadan there is Laylatul Qadr (the night of Decree)

"Indeed We have revealed it (Qur'an) in the night of Decree. And what will explain to you what the night of Decree is? The night of Decree is better than a thousand months. Therein descends the Angels and the Spirit (Jibreel) by Allah's permission, on every errand: (they say) "peace" (continuously) till the rise of Morning!" (97:1-5)

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (S) said " The blessed month has come to you. Allah has made fasting during it obligatory upon you. During it the gates to Paradise are opened and the gates of Hellfire are locked, and the devils are chained. There is a night [during this month] which is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived of its good is really deprived [of something great]. [Ahmad, an-Nisa'i and al-Bayhaqi].

An Umra in Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj

`Ata' said : I heard Ibn 'Abbas saying, "Allah's Apostle asked an Ansari woman (Ibn 'Abbas named her but 'Ata' forgot her name), 'What prevented you from performing Hajj with us?' She replied, 'We have a camel and the father of so-and-so and his son (i.e. her husband and her son) rode it and left one camel for us to use for irrigation.' He said (to her), 'Perform 'Umra when Ramadan comes, for 'Umra in Ramadan is equal to Hajj (in reward),' or said something similar." [Bukhari].

A Means of Forgiveness

It is a reality that none of us is perfect. We all have some weaknesses and shortcoming and we find ourselves committing sins out of ignorance or out of submission to our desires and whims and thus driving ourselves away from Allah darkening our heart and sealing them from guidance and



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overloading our books of bad deeds. However, Allah said of Himself that He is the Most Merciful the oft-Forgiving. As part of this infinite Mercy He made available for us various ways of achieving forgiveness and sin expiation. Among the most important and beneficial of these ways of forgiveness is fasting in general and in Ramadan in particular. Let us discover this glad tiding from the sweet words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet ﷺ said : "The time between the five prayers, two consecutive Friday Prayers, and two consecutive Ramadan are expiations for all that has happened during that period, provided that one has avoided the grave (major) sins." [Muslim]

Abu Huraira narrated that Allah's Messenger said : "Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven." [Bukhari]

"Whoever establishes prayers during the nights of Ramadan (and that is called Qiyam) faithfully out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not for showing off), all his past sins will be forgiven. [Bukhari]

Abu Hurairah also narrated that the Prophet, ﷺ, climbed upon the mimbar (pulpit) and said: "Aameen [O Allah grant it], aameen, aameen". So it was said, "O Messenger of Allah, you climbed upon the mimbar and said : "aameen, aameen, aameen"? So he said : "Jibraa'eel, `alaihi assalam, came to me and said, 'Whoever reaches the month of Ramadan and does not have [his sins] forgiven and so enters Fire, then may Allah distance him, say aameen". So I said "aameen". [Ibn Khuzaimah, Ahmad and al-Baihaqi : Sahih]

Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yamaan reported that the Prophet, ﷺ, said: "The evils caused for a man through his family, wealth and neighbor are expiated by prayer, fasting and charity." [Bukhari and Muslim]. In another narration in Sahih al-Jami': "The evils caused for a man through his family, his wealth, himself, his children and his neighbor are expiated by fasting, prayer, charity, enjoining the good and forbidding the bad.

Three levels of fasting

There are three levels of fasting:

- the general fast which most people keep
- the specific fast which fewer people are able to keep, and
- the fast of those who attain closeness to Allah swt

The fast of general people

The general fast is the refraining of one's stomach and private parts from fulfilling their desires.



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The first of these three levels entails the abstinence which is fulfilled, the fast is considered complete in view of the one having met the legislated requirements [i.e. It does not have to be repeated or made up, the servant has indeed fasted.]

The specific fast which fewer people are able to keep

The specific fast is the refraining of one's gaze, tongue, hands, feet, hearing and eyes, as well as the rest of his body parts from committing sinful acts.

From the characteristics of the specific fast is that one lowers his gaze and safeguards his tongue from the repulsive speech that is forbidden, disliked, or which has no benefit, as well as controlling the rest of his body parts. In a hadeeth by al-Bukhari:

“Whosoever does not abandon false speech and the acting upon it, Allah is not in need off his food and drink.”

Another characteristic of the specific fast is that one does not overfill himself with food during the night. Instead, he eats in due measure, for indeed, the son of Adam does not fill a vessel more evil than his stomach. If he were to eat his fill during the first part of the night, he would not make good use of himself for the remainder of the night. In the same way, if he eats to his fill for suhoor, he does make good use of himself until the afternoon. This is because excessive eating breeds laziness and lethargy therefore, the objective of fasting disappears due to one's excessiveness in eating, for what is indeed intended by the fast, is that one savours the taste of hunger and becomes an abandoner of desires.

If the second level is not met, the fast will be of less value to the servant, than if it were met and likewise for the third.

The fast of those who attain nearness to Allah swt – the desired level

The third type of the fast which is the fast of highly devotional people is the fasting of heart from the evil thoughts. It is the heart's abstention from its yearning after the worldly affairs and the thoughts which distance one away from Allah, as well as its (the heart's) abstention.

CONTEMPLATION TASK FOR LESSON 28

Analyse the type of fast you keep. Is it just the fast of stomach and private parts or do you also prevent your other body parts from sinning? What about your heart? Do you prevent it from having any evil thoughts too? If not, devise a strategy for making the upcoming Ramadan to be the best Ramadan of your life.